WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An illuminating optical unit in an image display unit for forming an image by irradiating a spatial modulation device with a laser beam and modulating said laser beam based on an image signal inputted to said spatial modulation device, comprising:

polarized light rotation means for equally dividing a polarized light component of said laser beam into a P polarized light component and an S polarized light component;

polarized light separation means for separating from each other said P polarized light component and said S polarized light component equally divided by said polarized light rotation means; and

optical path difference generation means for generating an optical path difference not less than the coherence length of said laser beam between a laser beam of said P polarized light component and a laser beam of said S polarized light component.

2. The illuminating optical unit in an image display unit as set forth in claim 1, wherein said polarized light separation means and said optical path difference generation means are constituted in the form of one prism.

3. The illuminating optical unit in an image display unit as set forth in claim 1, comprising:

beam intensity separation means for separating the intensity of said laser beam to form two or more laser beams parallel to each other and generating an optical path difference not less than the coherence length of said laser beam between said two or more separated laser beams.

4. The illuminating optical unit in an image display unit as set forth in claim 3, wherein

the absolute value of the difference between said optical path difference generated by said optical path difference generation means and said optical path difference generated by said beam intensity separation means is not less than said coherence length.

5. The illuminating optical unit in an image display unit as set forth in claim 1, wherein

said spatial modulation device is a grating light valve.

6. An image display unit for displaying an image by irradiating a spatial modulation device with a laser beam and modulating said laser beam based on an image signal inputted to said spatial modulation device, wherein

illuminating optical unit for irradiating said spatial modulation device with said laser beam comprises:

polarized light rotation means for equally dividing a polarized light component of said laser beam into a P polarized light component and an S polarized light component;

polarized light separation means for separating from each other said P polarized light component and said S polarized light component equally divided by said polarized light rotation means; and

optical path difference generation means for generating an optical path difference not less than the coherence length of said laser beam between a laser beam of said P polarized light component and a laser beam of said S polarized light component.

7. The image display unit as set forth in claim 6, wherein

said polarized light separation means and said optical path difference generation means are constituted in the form of one prism.

8. The image display unit as set forth in claim 6, comprising:

beam intensity separation means for separating the intensity of said laser beam to form two or more laser beams parallel to each other and generating an optical path difference not less than the coherence length of said laser beam between said two or more separated laser beams.

9. The image display unit as set forth in claim 8, wherein

the absolute value of the difference between said optical path difference generated by said optical path difference generation means and said optical path difference generated by said beam intensity separation means is not less than said coherence length.

10. The image display unit as set forth in claim 6, wherein

said spatial modulation device is a grating light valve.